FUTURE RESOURCE ECONOMY AND POLICIES IN LAOS TILL THE YEAR 2020 (FREPLA) 2008–2012
Finland Futures Research Centre

Location of the action: Lao PDR
Total costs of the project: 380 000 €
Funded by: Academy of Finland
Length of the project: 1/2008–12/2012
Project partners: Ministry of Energy and Mines (MEM), Lao PDR

In terms of social wellbeing and economic activity, Lao PDR is one of the poorest countries in Southeast Asia. Yet it is rich in terms of natural resources and holds a huge potential in renewable energy sector. FREPLA project incorporates resource development view point into a single research and development (R&D) set-up. The project aimed at identifying interlinkages, barriers, trade-offs and synergies in using the full potential of rural energy resources and applying holistic water management in national strategic planning. The key message of the project was that it is necessary to assure that the Mekong and its ecosystem services (including national and regional agri- and aquaculture) are not excessively distrubed by hydropower or any other natural resource projects, such as mining.

The following R&D methods were used and developed in the FREPLA project; adaptive foresight, decomposition analyses, material and energy flow modelling, Delphi Policy studies and interviews. The project produced several outputs; an integrated monitoring system for sustainable energy and water resources management; empirical national level resource management analyses; empirical sectoral level analyses for energy use; trend and scenario analyses of resources use; and analyses with selected set of environmental and socio-economic indicators.

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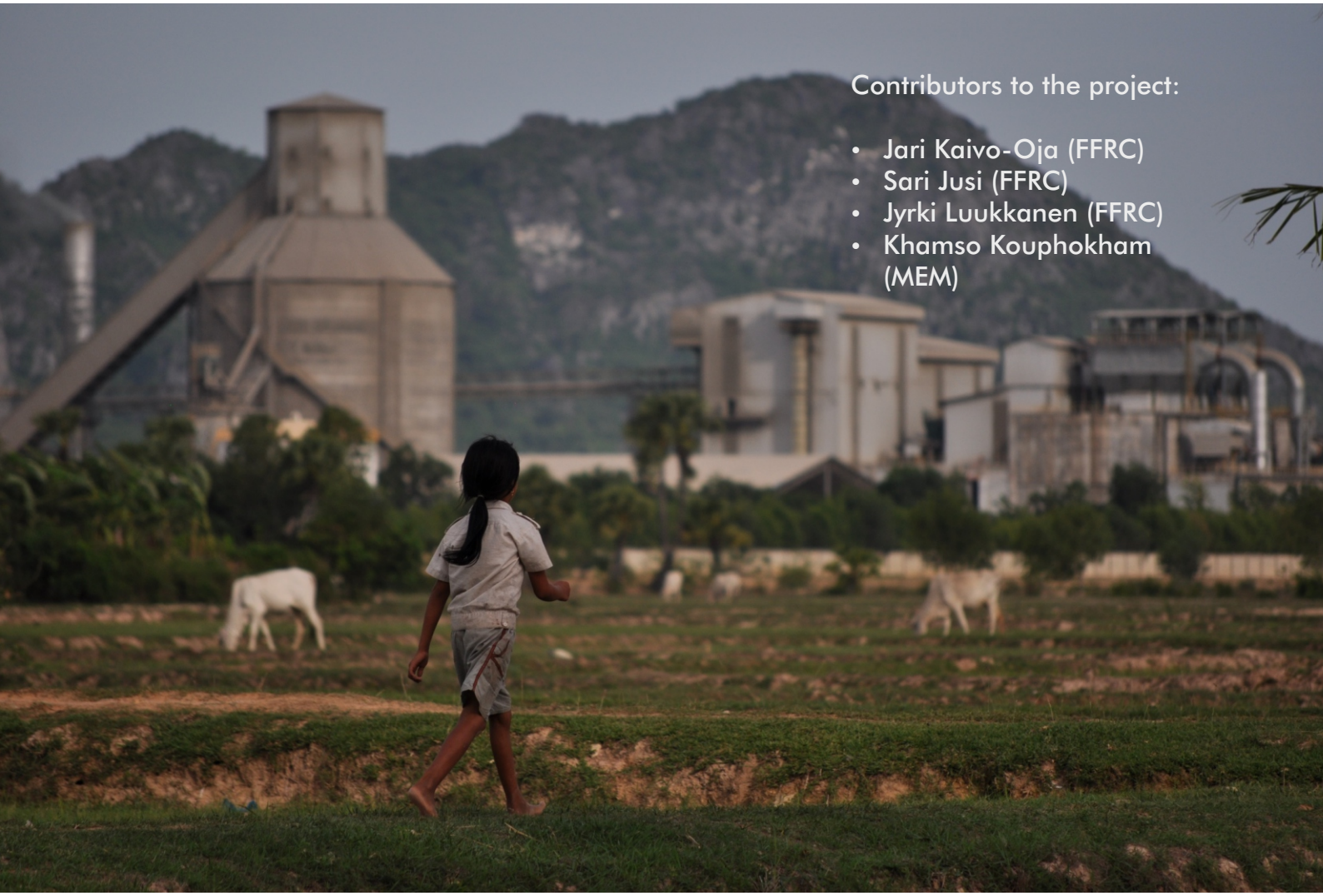
Laotian partners were engaged into the project with five consecutive workshops held in Laos during 2009–2011.

The energy consumption scenarios made in this project for Lao PDR vary. They can now direct investors and policy makers to make informed and sustainable desicions in the Laotian context. The critical questions in this regard are; where to invest and what kind of foreign investments are available for these purposes, and what are the government priorities and where should they allocate their revenues. All the produced scenarios have (if realized) different impacts to the daily lives of the Lao people.

Dr. Sari Jusi completed her PhD in the FREPLA project.



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Kaivo-oja, J., Jusi, S., Luukkanen, J., Panula-Ontto, J. & K. Kouphokham (2014) Futures Horizon to Sustainability Challenges of the Lao PDR 2050. Adaptive Foresight Thinking and New Futures Perspectives to Energy and Natural Resource Planning in the Lao People's Democratic Republic. FFRC eBOOK 11/2014. Finland Futures Research Centre, University of Turku.

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Jusi, S. (2013). "Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) Approach in Water Governance in Lao PDR: Cases of Hydropower and Irrigation". Academic doctoral thesis. Acta Universitatis Tamperensis 1815. University of Tampere, School of Management.